ANNUAL ECA ALUMNI PROJECT COMPETITION FY2011
CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SUMMARY

The State Departments' Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) Office of Alumni Affairs (ECA/P/A) invites Alumni to submit proposals for the FY2011 ECA Alumni Project Competition. This annual competition, now in its eighth year, is designed to support programming activities that involve exchange program alumni. The deadline for submission of project proposals is March 10, 2011.

ECA's Office of Alumni Affairs initiated an annual alumni projects competition in FY2004 as part of its mandate to assist Public Affairs Sections in their engagement with ECA alumni. The annual competition supports efforts to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other nations, and assists exchange program alumni to build on concepts and ideas they explored during their exchange program. ECA funded seventy-two of the ninety-six project proposals received in FY2010. Posts were awarded an average of USD 14,500 per project.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must include the following:

>   A. Completed project proposal form.
>   B. Detailed budget with mandatory cost-sharing.
>   C. Detailed Alumni Outreach Strategy (AOS) from the Embassy's Public affairs Section.
>   D. Adherence to March 10, 2011 deadline.
>   E. Please forward proposals for Embassy Skopje to Albion Abdullai at abdullaia@state.gov

----
PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

A. Projects must support U.S. foreign policy objectives and fulfill the overarching ECA Alumni Program goal: To foster U.S. diplomatic mission engagement with ECA alumni.

Therefore, projects must include the direct involvement of Embassy Officers. This may take many forms such as holding discussion groups with alumni, appearing on public panels with alumni, volunteering in an alumni-run project or attending an alumni-run event or program.

B. Projects should also support one or more of the following additional ECA Alumni Program goals:

>   1) To foster alumni implementation and sharing of concepts explored in their exchange programs;
>   2) To provide training that will improve ability of alumni to implement ideas;
>   3) To involve alumni in recruiting exchange participants, and/or promoting their exchange program, especially among non-traditional audiences; and,
>   4) To enable alumni to work collectively to share the benefits of their exchange experience with home country audiences and to "give back" to the program in which they participated.

C. Projects should promote the State Alumni website.

All alumni involved in the project should register for the State Alumni website, https://alumni.state.gov Alumni receiving program funds must share their experiences with the global community by posting articles/blogs about ongoing activities on https://alumni.state.gov

D. Project proposals should be detailed, demonstrating:

    1) Clear goals,
    2) Reliable Partner institutions,
    3) Transparent evaluation process,
    4) Valid post justification, and
    5) Realistic timeline and project steps.

E. Project proposals must include a detailed budget, demonstrating:

    1) Reasonable costs,
    2) Featured cost-sharing, and that
    3) Sustainability is achievable once funding has ceased.

PROJECT PROPOSAL FORMAT AND SUBMISSION

Proposals must be submitted using the "FY2011 ECA Alumni Project Competition" proposal and budget forms, which will be emailed to posts. Form templates will also be available on the Department of State Personnel Community on the State Alumni website, https://alumni.state.gov/dos

----
FUNDING GUIDELINES

Budget requests cannot exceed USD 25,000 per post. All budgets must be submitted using the budget form provided.

A. Cost-sharing and/or in-kind support is mandatory. Applicants are encouraged to take advantage of in-kind support from businesses, universities, NGOs, and other public-private partnership opportunities. Cost-sharing can also include resources available through PAS, including the following:

    1) Existing or donated space for events (i.e. American Corners).
    2) Donated or borrowed equipment for one-time only events.
    3) Use of American Fulbrighters, English Language Fellows, or other American visitors in the region to serve as speakers.
    4) Use of alumni volunteers to assist in project mission (i.e. recruiting new exchange participants, mentoring youth).

B. Applicants should take advantage of the following resources from ECA's Office of Alumni Affairs:

1) Use of existing State Alumni website infrastructure to support new alumni websites/ communities.
    https://alumni.state.gov/communities
2) Use of existing ECA Alumni Archive for alumni database development.
    http://alumniarchive.state.gov

C. Funds may be used for any activity that furthers the goals of ECA's Office of Alumni Affairs described above. Alumni Program funds CANNOT be used:

    1) To cover representational costs, i.e. receptions.
    2) To fund alumni websites separate from https://alumni.state.gov
    3) For database development that does not share data with ECA's Alumni Archive,
    http://alumniarchive.state.gov
    4) To support individual research projects of alumni.

5) To pay salaries or administrative overhead for anyone working on the alumni project.
6) To pay for international travel outside post's region, including travel to/from the United States.
7) To pay for speakers traveling from the United States.

D. Alumni Program funds CAN be used:

1) To cover the reasonable cost of food if it is an integral part of the program.
2) To pay for national and regional travel within post's country and region.
3) For regional or in-country speakers.
4) Other activities that further the goals of post's Alumni Outreach Strategy.

SUSTAINABILITY AND STRATEGY BUILDING

ECA aims to support projects that reflect a realistic Alumni Outreach Strategy. Project proposals lacking a clear progression toward sustainability will be deemed less competitive. As alumni associations expand outreach efforts, they should work toward greater self-reliance. Requests for new activities, however, can be considered for full funding.

Project proposals focused on the areas below will be deemed more competitive:

- English language;
- Youth leadership;
- Public/private partnerships;
- Democracy and human rights;
- Economic opportunity, prosperity, and entrepreneurship;
- Women's empowerment;
- Promoting a better environment;
- Food security;
- Global health; and,
- Outreach to marginalized communities.

Sustainable Project Ideas:

ECA welcomes competitive and sustainable project proposals. Support for alumni associations, database development, connecting alumni with NGO partners, utilizing alumni to engage youth, and alumni mentoring programs are just a few examples of competitive and sustainable project ideas. More ideas can be found in:

1) The Post's Guide to the Alumni Project Competition, which will be emailed and available on the State Alumni section of the website for DOS employees.
2) The news section of State Alumni's Global Community, https://alumni.state.gov/news2
3) The Department of State Personnel Community on State Alumni, https://alumni.state.gov/dos/resources/funding
4) The Alumni Association Resources Section on State Alumni at https://alumni.state.gov/associations